



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Hon. Harry J. Tutunjian
mayorsoffice@troyny.gov

518.270.4401
fax 518.270.4609
www.troyny.gov

New Legislation to Deter School Violence

For Immediate Release
Contact Jeff Buell (518)- 270-4554

(March 26, 2004- TROY) Mayor Harry Tutunjian joined with Troy School Superintendent Armand Reo, Lansingburgh School Superintendent Lee Bordick, several members of both School Board's, and City Council representatives to jointly announce and support legislation that will adopt a school curfew ordinance in the City of Troy.

The school curfew is set up similarly to Troy's nighttime curfew in that it puts the onus for kids' behavior on the parents. Any child 17 and under that is within 2000 feet of a school during school hours, or any activities, can be detained by the Troy Police Department for loitering. The child will then be held until the parents can pick them up.

The second time an incident like that occurs, the parent will be fined \$100, and the child will be ordered to do 25 hours of community service.

Tutunjian said he has heard from many people about the kids that hang out across from both Troy High School and Lansingburgh High School. Many parents have complained there is drug activity amongst these groups, and the situation is not conducive to a safe learning environment.

"This is a measure that is being presented to the City Council with one goal in mind- to improve the future for our children," Tutunjian said. "Under no circumstance should a kid have to arrive at school or leave the premises wondering what is going to happen. I have heard from numerous kids in the school about the drug activity. I have seen the large groups myself. These are problems that we need to address."

At least six incidents occurred in the first three months of the year in which fights broke out amongst students and resulted in injuries, including a broken jaw, a broken nose, and hospitalization. While fights and disagreements among kids are expected, it does not mean that chaos should rule.

"There is no reason that there should be groups of kids hanging around the street for no reason at all, during all hours of the day," Tutunjian said. "No reason at all."

The final aspect of the program will be enforcement. While the curfew law often draws criticism from residents for not being used enough, Tutunjian said the School Curfew Law will be enforced, and students will feel the police presence.

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“Enforcement is the key to the whole thing,” Tutunjian said. “Voluntary compliance is another word from the past. Kids meant to be in school, will stay in school. Those that aren’t supposed to be in school, won’t be anywhere near the school. It’s a very simple concept.”

Both Council members Carolin Collier and Mark Wojcik said Friday they support the legislation.

“I have heard from numerous people in Lansingburgh that the kids hanging around outside of schools are becoming a real problem,” Wojcik said. “I have seen this problem with my own eyes during numerous visits to the school. I am happy to see that we are taking steps to resolve this problem now rather than later.”

“Acknowledging you have a problem is the first step in solving it,” Collier said. “This legislation will give the Troy Police Department something to fight back with. Instead of telling kids to just move along and have them sneer at you, there will be repercussions.”

Several members of the Troy School Board have written Tutunjian in support of the legislation, and Reo and Bordick have expressed a willingness to cooperate and make the new ordinance work.